

The Best Verse of the Week

Poems That Have Been Translated and Some Others That Will Be

El Charro.

By Jose Santos Chocano.

Translated by John Pierrepont Rice.

A coat of silk, cheap jewels he loves to flaunt,
Some tawdry lace that serves him for a frill;
He grasps a pistol butt, and seems to taunt
The world and grip it in his ugly will.

Striding his bronco with its braided tail,
Crowned by a hat that tapers to a cone—
One feels no bribe nor violence could prevail
To make him change his saddle for a throne.

Proud of his seat, he cracks his rawhide lash,
The brute obeys, a spark flies from his hoof,
He plunges; and with pistol at his sash
His master strides him, haughty and aloof.

These seem no man and horse in mortal strife,
But some Olympic figure come to life.
From Poetry: A Magazine of Verse.

Yesterday.

By S. Gertrude Ford.

Golden and gay the dawn,
The evening was but softly, sweetly gray;
The boys still played at cricket on the lawn,
The dead lived, yesterday.

Hope knew but common fears,
Not these; not these, which drain her life away!
The lad's eyes and the maid's had known no tears—
But that was yesterday.

Youth had a morrow then;
Bounded behold it now by cross and clay!
And who would envy us to-morrow, when
We think of yesterday?

Yet this day's but a breath
Blown from a fuller sunrise, so they say,
When war too—war and woe and life and death—
Shall be of yesterday.

From the London Daily Mail.

Song of Days.

By Frank L. Stanton.

My meatless day
Has gone away,
And my wheatless day comes round,
But I'm free to say:
My moneyless day
Ain't gittin' over ground.
For the price honks high
And the dollars cry:
"We can't git by—
We can't git by!"

From the Atlanta Constitution.

Letters Home.

By William Herschell.

Soldier he was—and a good one, too—
Though you may wonder just how I knew
That his was a heart well steeled to test
The enemy's bravest, truest, best.
'Twas this that made me know his worth
As one of the sturdy sons of earth!

He was tired to-day when drill was done,
For he had been up before the sun,
Yet toil was turned to a new delight—
There were letters home he had to write.
Letters to prove—as they only can—
The tender side of a martial man.

He would ease with jokes their anxious fears.
He would dry with smiles their ready tears;
He would make the old folks think back home
That war was only a hippodrome.
He would speak of camp as a chummy thing
Where comrades loiter and laugh and sing.

He wrote and wrote—and his heart grew glad!—
Well, after all, war wasn't so bad!
It had brought to him good comrades new
To cherish with friends he was writing to.
So he grinned and pledged the Flag new might—
And grinners are hell when they start to fight!

From the Indianapolis News.

Song.

By John Towner Frederick.

Oh you gray lipped faiths in things tangible,
You are very large and enormously limbed.
But your limbs are rotten.
You are moribund. You are about to decay.
There is truth come into the world.
It is small truth, but it is greater than you are.
Oh you who die.
It is the nature of light,
And of the nature of that which is the universe,
And that which is the perfume of petunia beds at dawn.
It is different from you, and nameless and eternal.
You are not it. You are dying.

From the Poetry Journal.

From an Office Window.

By Stanley Kidder Wilson.

The game is running out. It is God's move.
Dusk is the fixed time limit and issue looms
Terse in the west. Now the vast board assumes
Blurred values: here and there lights leaping groove
A magic salient which it might behoove
The lapsing hours to urge; but checkmate booms
From chorusing clocks and in a thousand rooms
Play for the day halts, the day's work to prove.

The bishop's square goes black: cloaked spaces yawn
Where churchyard masses round its spire; knight, king
And consort petrify where fused piles cling
To one poised point of light against the dawn;
While from my eyrie of defeat I fling
A challenge to to-morrow, I, a pawn.

Ophelia Roses.

By Lucy Eddy.

Out of the dawn
Trembling with moon-mist!
The glow of a sun-gold rose!
Wild as a wood-bird note,
Fragrant as crushed red wine.

From Poetry: A Magazine of Verse.

Red Eucalyptus Blossoms.

By Lucy Eddy.

A flame of scarlet
Flares in the treetops;
It spreads like wild-fire
And runs crackling over
The blue-green leaves.

From Poetry: A Magazine of Verse.

Two Stars.

By Eva H. Thornburg.

Two stars in my window hang,
Two stars in a field of white;
Two sons have offered all
For liberty and right.

Each fondly by name I call,
Each star a face to me,
Alight with a purpose deep,
God grant them victory.

Proud of these sons am I;
Proud that they stood the test;
Proud that they offered all,
God help me bear the rest.

From the Los Angeles Times.

An Old "Likeness."

By Will T. Hale.

Hey, little boy, in the plain worn frame, alone on the
mantel there,
You've the same sweet smile that I knew so well when the
future spread out fair.

Little bright eyes with the unbrushed smiles, innocent,
true and blue,
The time has been long, been long, my boy, since last we
have looked on you.

Is it well with you in the life you lead in the some-
where lying far?
For the old folks pray, as they've always prayed, God
love you wherever you are!

From the Syracuse Post-Express.

Forest Lake.

By Louis Untermeyer.

What hushed, green spires are these! No sound
Of war disturbs this holy ground;
The reverent breezes seem to bear
The quiet like a silent prayer.
The very silences surround
The ripples with a chastening air.
And softer than its solitudes,
The lingering peace of evening broods
Over these woods.

The leaves are clasped, the trees are bowed,
And in the west a rosy cloud,
Screening the sun, seems like a veil
Hung in the skies to hide the grail.
And now, as twilight comes to shroud
Each open path or secret trail,
The whisper of the waves has grown
Into a chanted monotone,
Ancient, unknown.

And, like the echo of a choir,
Up in some towering poplar's spire
A veery's high note trembles long
And bursts into a spray of song,
An ecstasy of silver fire:
"I have seen God, O heedless throng!
This forest is His temple; in this field,
Deserted and forgot, He is revealed.
Come, and be healed!"

From the Century.

Fighting at Lung-Tou.

Translated From the Chinese by Arthur Waley.

The road that separates me mounts eight thousand feet,
The river that parts me hangs one hundred fathoms.
In summer the brambles so thick that one cannot pass—
In winter the snow so high that one cannot climb!
With branches that interlace Lung Valley is dark;
Against cliffs that tower one's voice beats and echoes.
I turn my head and it seems only a dream
That I ever lived in the streets of Hsien-yang.

From Poetry: A Magazine of Verse.

An Indian Lullaby.

By Agnes Lockhart Hughes.

Hush, little pappoose, hush;
The clovers kneel 'midst the grasses hush,
Day steals away with a crimson blush,
The wild rose dreams with her face afflush,
Hush, little pappoose, hush.

Sleep, little pappoose mine;
The south wind sighs through the whispering pine,
The poppy's cup brims with sleep's drugged wine,
And night's cool stars o'er our wigwam shine,
Sleep, little pappoose mine.

Dream, dusky child of the West;
The dewdrop sleeps on the pansy's breast,
The song bird sways in its soft brown nest
And cloud beats float o'er the moon's pale crest;
Sleep, dream, rest.

From the Oakland Tribune.

A Care-Free Thought.

It makes a man
Feel wondrous gay
To get up on
A workless day
And suddenly
To realize
It matters not
How tempus flies.

From the Birmingham Age-Herald.

Anxious Dead.

By John McCrae.

O guns, fall silent till the dead men hear
Above their heads the legions pressing on!
(These fought their fight in time of bitter fear
And died not knowing how the day had gone.)

O flashing muzzles, pause and let them see
The coming dawn that streaks the sky afar!
Then let your mighty chorus witness be
To them, and Caesar, that we still make war.

Tell them, O guns, that we have heard their call;
That we have sworn and will not turn aside;
That we will onward till we win or fall;
That we will keep the faith for which they died.

Bid them be patient, and some day, anon,
They shall feel earth enwrapped in silence deep—
Shall greet in wonderment the quiet dawn,
And in content may turn them to their sleep.

From the London Spectator.

My Ship.

By Edmund Leamy.

My ship is an old ship and her sails are gray and torn
And in the dim and misty night she seems a thing
forlorn;
Her battered sides are beetle black, her decks are scarred
and old,
And heavy rise the musty scents from out her crumbling
hold.

The young ships in the tide-way with a sneering smile
sail by,
And fair they flash their white sails against the sun-
drenched sky,
And fleet they run before the clouds that usher in a
blow,
But could a storm coerce my ship when'er she wished
to go!

My ship is an old ship and her sails are torn and gray,
And she's not white and beautiful, nor fragile such as
they,
But she has sailed o'er every sea to every land a-gleam,
And on her decks make merry now the wraiths of youth-
ful dream!

From My Ship and Other Voices. (John Lane Co.)

The Suburbanite.

To the seed store he toddles,
The seed book has its thrills.
You see the latest models
In beets and daffodils.

At night with joyous movements
He paws the magazines,
And studies the improvements
In marigolds and beans.

From the Kansas City Journal.